I’m Gonna Be an Engineer (Peggy Seeger)

When I was a little girl I wished I was a boy
I tagged along behind the gang and wore my corduroys
Everybody said I only did it to annoy
But I was gonna be an engineer

Mamma told me, "Can't you be a lady?
Your duty is to make me the mother of a pearl
Wait until you're older, dear, and maybe
You'll be glad that you're a girl"

Dainty as a Dresden statue, gentle as a Jersey cow
Smooth as silk, gives creamy milk
Learn to coo, learn to moo
That's what you do to be a lady, now

When I went to school, I learned to write and how to read
Some history, geography, and home economy
And typing is a skill that every girl is sure to need
To while away the extra time until the time to breed
Then they have the nerve to say, "What would you like to be?"
I says, "I'm gonna be an engineer!"

"No, you only need to learn to be a lady
The duty isn't yours for to try and run the world
An engineer could never have a baby
Remember, dear, that you're a girl"

She's smart...for a woman
I wonder how she got that way?
You get no choice, you get no voice
Just stay mum, pretend you're dumb
That's how you come to be a lady, today

Then Jimmy come along and we set up a conjugation
We were busy every night with love and recreation
I spent the day at work so he could get his education
Well, now he's an engineer!

He says, "I know you'll always be a lady
It's the duty of my darling to love me all her life
Could an engineer look after or obey me?
Remember, dear, that you're my wife!"

Well, as soon as Jimmy got a job, I began again
Then happy at me turret lathe a year or so, and then
The morning that the twins were born, Jimmy says to them
"Kids, your mother was an engineer!"

"You owe it to the kids to be a lady
Dainty as a dishrag, faithful as a chow
Stay at home, you got to mind the baby
Remember you're a mother now!"
Well, every time I turn around, there's something else to do
It's cook a meal, mend a sock, sweep a floor or two
Listening to Jimmy Young, it makes me want to spew
"I was gonna be an engineer!"

Don't I really wish that I could be a lady
I could do the lovely things that a lady's supposed to do
I wouldn't even mind if only they would pay me
Then I could be a person too

What price for a woman?
You could buy her for a ring of gold
To love and obey without any pay
You get a cook and a nurse for better or worse
You don't need a purse when the lady is sold

Oh, but now that times are harder and me Jimmy's got the sack
I went down to Vickers, they were glad to have me back
But I'm a third-class citizen, my wages tell me that
And I'm a first-class engineer!

The boss, he says, "We pay you as a lady
You only got the job 'cause I can't afford a man
With you, I keep the profits high as may be
You're just a cheaper pair of hands."
You got one fault...you're a woman
You're not worth the equal pay

A bitch or a tart, you're nothing but heart
Shallow and vain, you got no brain
You even go down the drain like a lady today

Well, I listened to my mother and I joined a typing pool
I listened to my lover and I put him through his school
But if I listen to the boss, I'm just a bloody fool
And an underpaid engineer

I've been a sucker ever since I was a baby
As a daughter, as a wife, as a mother, and a dear
But I'll fight them as a woman, not a lady
Fight them as an engineer!